

FORM B – BUILDING

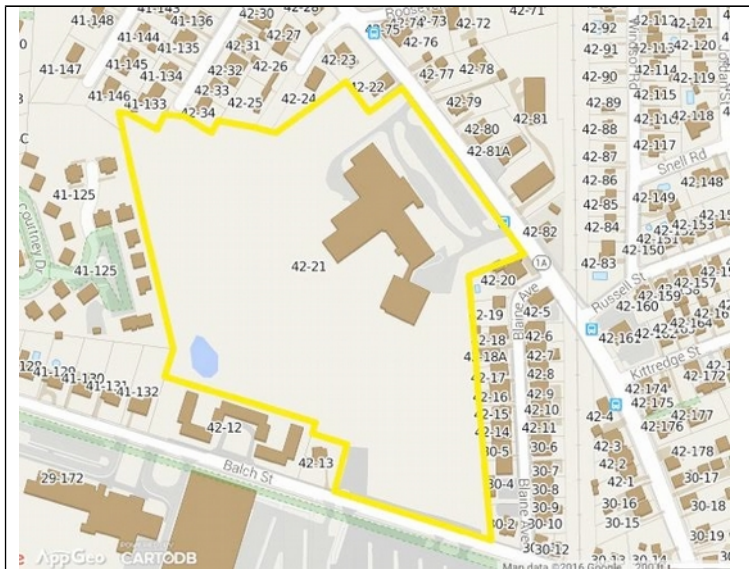
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



East (façade) elevation

Locus Map (north at top)



Recorded by: Wendy Frontiero and Pamela Hartford

Organization: Beverly Historic District Commission

Date (month / year): September 2016

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

42-21

Salem

BEV.1117

Town/City: Beverly

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):
North Beverly

Address: 502 Cabot Street

Historic Name: Memorial Junior High School

Uses: Present: demolished over the course of the
survey project

Original: school

Date of Construction: 1952-54

Source: Dept. of Public Safety records and
Municipal Documents

Style/Form: Mid-20th C Modern

Architect/Builder: Leland & Larsen, architects;
John A. Volpe Construction Co.

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete

Wall/Trim: brick

Roof: tar and gravel

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):
Replacement windows (late 20th c) – demolition (2016)

Condition: NA

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 17.71 acres

Setting: Located on main thoroughfare of Cabot Street
(Route 1A), leading from downtown to North Beverly.
Heterogeneous neighborhood of mostly residential buildings
from turn of the 19th century through late 20th century; small
scale commercial development located opposite this parcel.

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

The Memorial Junior High School building occupied a large lot on the west side of Cabot Street, with a small frontage on Balch Street to the south. (For convenience of terminology, the building is assumed to face east, although it more accurately faces northeast.) The land is flat at the east and west edges of the parcel, and slopes gently down to the west in the center. The building was set roughly in the center of the Cabot Street frontage, behind a semicircular driveway and small surface parking lot with medium-sized street trees. The main building consisted of three rectangular wings (north, west, and south) attached at right angles roughly in a T-shape, with a roughly square gymnasium wing extending at a diagonal angle from the back corner of the south wing.

The three major wings of the building rose three stories on the south and west and two stories on the north; the main entrance was located at the nexus of these three wings, roughly in the center of the Cabot Street façades. Each wing was approximately 50 feet wide and between 120 and 135 feet long, with intermittent, minor, 1 and 2-story appendages at the sides and rear. Typically rising from a low concrete base, walls were clad in red brick in a Flemish bond pattern; a grey-buff brick accented the lower part of the Cabot Street façades. Windows were typically arrayed in continuous horizontal bands, which were infilled with 1/1 sash and metal panels above. (These bands were originally filled with glass block for evenly diffused light.) On the Cabot Street façade, paired windows occurred on the second floor of the south wing and at the bottom of the north (auditorium) wing.

The main entrance was a substantial projection on the Cabot Street façade, comprised of a one-story lobby with three pairs of metal and glass doors surmounted by a high glazed transom, sheltered by grey-buff wing walls and a very slightly curved roof that angled up towards Cabot Street. The doorway was accessed by broad granite steps. The entrance vestibule was flanked on each side by a narrow flat-roofed canopy whose outer end was supported by a single, slender steel column.

The short elevations of the south and west wings of the main building contained a single, multi-story bay in the center, consisting of a doorway on the ground level and paired windows with metal spandrel panels above. The secondary entrances were often accented by a slightly projecting, flat brick frame and contained double-leaf doors. The north (auditorium) wing featured paired windows at the lower level of its Cabot Street façade, single windows at the upper level of its north elevation, and a mix of banded and single windows on the 1 ½ story appendage on its north end.

Set at an angle to the rest of the school building, to which it was connected by a narrow, 2-story corridor, the gymnasium was a high one-story volume with flat roofs that stepped down towards the northwest elevation. The gymnasium's mostly utilitarian entrances had deeply recessed doors that were placed at outer bays on the southeast and southwest elevations. The northwest elevation featured a small projecting entrance vestibule near the center with a cantilevered, flat-roof canopy. Fenestration on the gymnasium included small, paired sash near the roof line on the northeast, southeast, and southwest elevations, and continuous bands of windows at the first and second levels of the northwest elevation.

The Memorial Junior High School was a significant example of mid-20th century modern, civic architecture in Beverly. Although stylistically relatively simple, the design was notable for its bold, complex massing; combination of modern materials; amplitude and variety of fenestration; stylish main entrance; and array of articulated secondary entrances.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

Continuation sheet 1

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Construction of the Memorial Junior High School was propelled by the boom in school age students after World War II, although the need had been identified as early as 1935. Overcrowding at both the high school and elementary schools combined with new educational theories to produce Beverly's first junior high school. The combination of grades 7 and 8 from the elementary schools and grade 9 from the high school was promoted as a way to improve services for early adolescents, with better equipment and a greater variety of offerings. A second new junior high school was intended, but never built. (The high school building on Sohier Road was converted into Briscoe Junior High School when a new high school was built farther north on Sohier Road.)

The United Shoe Machinery Corporation donated 20 acres of land for the new junior high school. Construction began in 1952 and was completed in 1954, at a cost of \$2.1 million. In its 110,000 feet of floor space, the new school contained 24 classrooms, two study halls, a music room, specialty rooms for technical and vocational skills, a gymnasium divisible into two separate parts for boys and girls, a cafeteria seating 375, a library seating 100, and an auditorium seating 900. The auditorium was dedicated to Augustus P. Loring, Jr., who had served as chairman of the school committee from 1924-40. The gymnasium was dedicated to Corporal Joseph Vittori, Beverly's only awardee of the Congressional Medal of Honor, who had died in Korea.

The dedication ceremony on 31 October 1954 was attended by more than 12,000 people, including U. N. Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., the vice president of United Shoe Machinery Corp, and representatives of the architect and the building contractor. Members of the United Spanish War Veterans, Sons of Union Veterans Auxiliary, American Legion, and Gold Star Mothers represented Beverly's war dead, to whom the school as a whole was dedicated. The dedication booklet records the architect's goals for "an efficient, smooth-working, well-lighted school plan in a well-design envelope" ("Dedication Booklet": n.p.), emphasizing its simplicity, durable materials, elm and elm-veneer plywood finishes, structural glazed tile, asphalt tile floors, strip windows filled with glass block for evenly-diffused light, and good sightlines and acoustics in the auditorium. The building was praised as "a truly modern and lasting school, rather than one which might have achieved the false economy of a lower initial cost and a correspondingly shorter life and higher maintenance cost" ("Dedication Booklet": n.p.). Its further advantages were reported as "a school which is modern in concept but never extreme, and which to its most minute detail is planned to fit the needs of the teachers and students, yet with a flexibility that will accommodate a wide variety of curriculum changes over the years ahead." ("Dedication Booklet": n.p.).

School use ended in 2007, when all Beverly middle school students were consolidated within the Briscoe Middle School on Sohier Road (see form for 7 Sohier Road). Municipal offices occupied this building until 2015. Demolition commenced in 2016; construction of a new middle school on this site is expected to be completed in 2018.

The architectural firm of Leland and Larsen included Brookline-born Joseph D. Leland (1885-1968) and Danish-born Neils Hjalmar Larsen (b. 1885). Leland was part of the firm of Loring and Leland that designed the Beverly Farms Library (1916; see form for 24 Vine Street). Loring and Leland were in partnership from 1913 to 1919; both practiced separately afterwards. Joseph Daniels Leland III studied at Harvard and in Paris; he worked for Peabody and Stearns in Boston before partnering with Loring. Leland on his own is identified with 42 properties in MACRIS, ranging from houses to apartment buildings to schools and commercial buildings. His most prominent works, in a varied repertory, are the Central Square Post Office in Cambridge (1933; NR 1986) and the Higgins Armory Museum in Worcester (1930; NR 1980; HABS No. MA-1236, 1989). Leland and Larsen is identified with 9 properties in MACRIS beginning in 1919: three in Brookline, two in Lexington, and one each in Framingham, Milton, Northbridge, and Southborough. They included two fire stations in Lexington (1946 and 1950) and a hospital in Milton (1949). Leland and Larsen is also known to have designed the Harrington School (1955) and Hayden Recreation Center in Lexington (1956). Further information on this prolific firm is found in a survey form for an early 20th century residential subdivision in Brookline:

"Joseph Daniels Leland (1885-1968) was born at Chapel Hill Station in Brookline, maintained his architecture firm offices in Boston, and resided in Milton. He was educated at the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard University (1905-1906), Harvard College (1906-1909), the Atelier Chiffot, Paris (1909-1911), and the Graduate School of Applied Science, Harvard University (1911-1912). Leland's biography in the 1955 AIA Directory describes his foreign travel as encompassing the "entire continent of Europe." He worked as a draftsman in the office of Peabody & Stearns (1910-1913) before entering into his first partnership, Loring & Leland (1913-1919). Leland formed J. D. Leland & Co. in 1919, practicing in partnership with Neils Larsen (see below). Other Boston-area architects whose work is represented in Brookline worked for brief periods at J.

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D. Leland & Co., among them Carney Goldberg and Walter Bogner. Beyond the Laurel Road area, the company's other known commissions in Brookline are the Alexander G. Grant House, 49 Worthington Road, Brookline (1927, MHC #89); and 170 Reservoir Road (1935, see area form for Chestnut Hill Golf Club Area). Leland also designed homes in Milton and Beverly, including the Quincy A. Shaw McKean House, Pride's Crossing (1926) and the Henry P. McKean House, Beverly Farms (1931). The company also designed the George Marston Whitin Gymnasium, Whitinsville, Northbridge (1924); the Higgins Armory Museum, 100 Barber Avenue, Worcester (1929-1930); and he served as chief architect of the Old Harbor Village housing project, South Boston (1937).

"In 1935, the firm name was changed to Leland & Larsen, reflecting the contributions of architect Neils Larsen, who apparently was a partner in J. D. Leland & Company since its organization in 1919. Born in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1885, Larsen was educated at the Boston Architectural Center, the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard, the American Academy in Rome, and held a Rotch Traveling Scholarship from 1911 to 1913. Before traveling in Europe, Larsen worked as a draftsman for Boston architects Luther C. Greenleaf (1902-1906); Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge (1907-1908); and Parker, Thomas & Rice (1908-1909), returning to Parker, Thomas & Rice in 1913 to serve as Chief Designer until 1919. Leland & Larsen maintained offices in Boston, Worcester, New York, and throughout New England. It is likely that Larsen was involved in the design of some buildings credited to J. D. Leland & Co. He was chief architect in the design of Old Harbor Village (see above), and was an Assistant Chief Architect as well as Contributing Architect in the design of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst (1954 onward). Leland taught design courses at MIT and the Boston Architectural Center." (Broomer, BKL.BC)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



East (façade) elevation: entrance and auditorium (north) wing



Gymnasium wing: south and east elevations



Gymnasium wing: west and south elevations



West and south wings: rear elevations

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SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



West wing: north and west elevations



Auditorium (north) wing: north elevation



East (façade) elevation detail, 1954